

Contemporary Fiction with an Irish Flavor

*The poignancy and truthful detail of Frank McCourt's memoir **Angela's Ashes** have whetted many readers' appetites for more accounts of life in Ireland in the twentieth century. Here is a selection of some of the best modern fiction exploring the complex issues of religion, national identity, and personal choice facing Irish men and women today, be they Catholic or Protestant, urbane city dwellers or rustic villagers.*

Colin Bateman. ***Cycle of Violence***. Smart-aleck Protestant journalist investigates murder & falls in love with a Catholic girl in a notorious Belfast ghetto. One of a series.

Maeve Binchy. ***The Lilac Bus, Tara Road***, and many other novels and short stories. Satisfying stories of the ambitions and disappointments of ordinary people in the cities and small towns of modern-day Ireland.

Clare Boylan. ***Black Baby***. A witty & touching tale of the unexpected bond between an aging Dublin spinster and a mysterious young black woman.

Roger Boylan. ***Killoyle: An Irish Farce***. The eccentric inhabitants of a small Irish town, described with laughter and tears by a writer in the tradition of Joyce and Beckett.

Ray Bradbury. ***Green Shadows, White Whale***. Fictionalized account of the "invasion" of a small seagoing village by John Huston's *Moby Dick* film crew and its impact on natives and visitors alike.

Maeve Brennan. ***Springs of Affection***. Interrelated stories which trace the patterns of love in three middle-class Dublin families.

Seamus Deane. ***Reading in the Dark***. A young Catholic boy's fascination with ghost stories sets him on a search for the truth about a family feud.

Roddy Doyle. ***The Commitments, The Snapper*** and others. Gritty yet humorous look at family life in working-class north Dublin (several of these novels have been made into movies which have acquired a near-cult status.)

Bartholomew Gill. ***The Death of an Irish Tinker*** and other mysteries. Chief Superintendent Peter McGarr, head of Ireland's Murder Squad, stars in this series which shines the spotlight of murder on the charms and the harsh realities of Irish life.

Anne Haverty. ***One Day as a Tiger***. The newest in genetic engineering and the age-old competition between brothers combine to cause tragedy in a remote Tipperary farming community.

Walter Keady. ***Mary McGreevy***. Peaceful village life in Kildawree in 1950 is disrupted by a former nun who returns to take over her family's farm – and attracts the attention of every man in the vicinity.

John B. Keane. ***Ram of God***. Jealousy, intrigue, and revenge in a country village.

Molly Keane. ***Time after Time*** and ***Good Behavior***. Fading gentry struggle to cope with change in the Irish countryside between the World Wars.

Marian Keyes. ***Watermelon***. The lighter side of Dublin life, as Claire returns to her family home to plot revenge on the husband who left her for another woman the very day their child was born. Delicious, comic, and very true to the life of the average Irish family.

Ladies' Night at Finbar's Hotel. Maeve Binchy, Anne Haverty and others collaborate on a light-hearted yet poignant snapshot of the lives of the guests during one night at a Dublin hotel.

Patrick McCabe. ***The Dead School*** and others. An award-winning author's explorations of the stultifying effects of small-town Irish society.

Adrian McKinty. ***Orange Rhymes with Everything***. Humorous and compassionate look at the sense of alienation

experienced by Protestants in Northern Ireland.

Michael M. McNamara. *The Dancing Floor*. The story of two brothers, one an idealist and the other a cynic, who become involved with the IRA.

Brian Moore. *Lies of Silence*. Terrorists force a man to participate in an attack on his own home in this suspenseful exploration of the moral and political issues faced every day by those who live in Northern Ireland.

Thomas Moran. *Water, Carry Me*. Una Moss is an orphan from a peaceful village when she goes off to university at Cork and discovers love, betrayal and the political realities of contemporary Ireland.

Christopher Nolan. *The Banyan Tree*. The lyrical saga of the O'Brien family and its rural diary farm, now reduced to aging widow Minnie who struggles to hold on to her heritage in the face of change.

Edna O'Brien. *Down by the River* and other novels and short stories. The dark side of families and relationships revealed in tales of child abuse, teen pregnancy, sectarian violence, and other ills of modern life.

Brendan O'Carroll. *The Mammy* and others. The light-hearted adventures of indomitable widow Agnes Browne and her brood of kids in working-class Dublin.

Frank O'Connor. *A Set of Variations* and other short story collections. Luminous stories of people both sustained and trapped by ties to family, love, faith, and country.

Nuala O'Faolain. *My Dream of You*. A middle-aged writer discovers truths about herself as she researches the Great Famine of the 1850s.

Chris Petit. *Psalm Killer*. DCI Cross of the Royal Ulster Constabulary's is English and Catholic – both of which cause him trouble with his colleagues as they search for a brutal serial killer whose murderous spree respects no religious or political boundaries.

Colm Toibin. *The Blackwater Lightship*. Three generations of Irish women come to terms with their lives and each other as they attend the bedside of a family member dying of AIDS.

William Trevor. *The News from Ireland, Beyond the Pale*, and other short story collections. Perceptive and compassionate explorations of the human strengths and weaknesses of the Irish people.

Vintage Book of Contemporary Irish Fiction. Short stories by many of the authors listed here and other chroniclers of present-day Ireland.

Robert McLiam Wilson. *Eureka Street: A Novel of Ireland Like No Other*. The comic adventures of Catholic Jake and his Protestant best friend Chuckie set against the tragic backdrop of Belfast life.